

Message Text

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ACTION HUD-01

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DEPT PASS HUD FOR HANCOCK

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: TGEN,UR, US
SUBJECT: US-USSR HOUSING AGREEMENT: VISIT OF SEISMIC
CONSTRUCTION DELEGATION (10.04)

1. EUVEN MAN US DELEGATION IN THE FIELD OF SEISMIC
ENGINEERING COMPLETED AN EIGHT DAY VISIT TO THE USSR ON
APRIL 25. THE DELEGATION DISCUSSED SEISMIC DESIGN
TECHNIQUES FOR MULTI-STORY BUILDINGS WITH SOVIET
SPECIALISTS IN BUILDING DESIGN AND RESEARCH INSTITUTES IN
MOSCOW, TASHKENT, AND TBILISI, VISITED CONSTRUCTION
SITES IN THE LATTER TWO CITIES, AND OBSERVED A LABORATORY
TEST FACILITY IN TBILISI. THE DELEGATION NOTED THAT
SOVIET RESEARCH AND DESIGN TECHNIQUES ARE OF INTEREST,
ESPECIALLY AS REGARDS THE USE OF LARGE PRE-CAST CONCRETE
PANEL CONSTRUCTION, WHICH THE SOVIETS EMPLOY FAR MORE
WIDELY THAN DOES THE US. HOWEVER, THE DELEGATES NOTED A
LARGE GAP BETWEEN THE DESIGN WORK AND ITS ACTUAL IMPLE-
MENTATION IN THE FIELD. DELEGATION MEMBERS WERE APPALLED
BY THE SHODDY QUALITY OF THE CONSTRUCTION THEY WERE
SHOWN. SEVERAL DELEGATES ADDED THAT SLOPPY EXECUTION OF
THE SEISMIC DESIGN FEATURES THEY OBSERVED COULD CAUSE
BUILDING FAILURE EVEN IN EARTHQUAKES WITHIN THE
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THEORETICAL DESIGN LIMITS OF THE STRUCTURE.

2. SOVIET HOSTS WERE EXTREMELY GENEROUS IN ARRANGING
HOSPITALITY FOR THE DELEGATION. HOWEVER, HOSPITALITY WAS
SO EXTENSIVE (AND LIQUID) THAT IT OFTEN LEFT LITTLE TIME
FOR SUBSTANTIVE WORK. SOVIETS WERE RELUCTANT TO ALLOW
US DELEGATES TO TAKE SOVIET TECHNICAL LITERATURE OF

INTEREST. WHEN US SPECIALISTS EXPRESSED INTEREST IN A DOCUMENT, ACCOMPANYING SOVIET WOULD GENERALLY NOTE THE REQUEST AND STATE THAT IT WOULD BE FORWARDED TO THE US WORKING GROUP CHAIRMAN LATER. WE WOULD APPRECIATE CONFIRMATION THAT SUCH MATERIAL IS ACTUALLY RECEIVED.

3. THE US SPECIALISTS NOTED THAT SOVIETS HAVE MORE LABORATORY TEST FACILITIES THAN ARE AVAILABLE IN THE US AND ALSO NOTED THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE A LARGER PROGRAM OF FULL SCALE TESTING OF SEISMIC EFFECTS ON ACTUAL BUILDINGS, USING ECCENTRIC SHAKERS. THE US SPECIALISTS STATED THAT IT WOULD BE BENEFICIAL TO OBTAIN ACCESS TO DATA FROM PAST SOVIET TESTS AND TO PARTICIPATE IN CURRENT TESTS IN SOVIET FACILITIES. THE US COULD THEN USE ITS GREATER COMPUTER CAPACITY TO ANALYZE THIS DATA FOR THE BENEFIT OF BOTH COUNTRIES. (DURING ONE CONVIVIAL LATE EVENING SESSION THE CHIEF SOVIET SPECIALIST ACCOMPANYING THE US DELEGATION CONFIDED THAT ACCESS TO US COMPUTER CAPACITY WAS IN FACT THE CHIEF SOVIET GOAL IN THIS WORKING GROUP.)

4. THE US SPECIALISTS ALSO NOTED THAT ANOTHER AREA OF GREAT POTENTIAL BENEFIT WOULD BE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEND A US STUDY TEAM TO OBSERVE FIRST HAND THE IMMEDIATE AFTER-MATH OF A MAJOR SOVIET EARTHQUAKE IN AN INHABITED AREA AND TO INSPECT ITS EFFECT UPON STRUCTURES, AS IS OFTEN DONE AFTER SEVERE EARTHQUAKES IN OTHER PARTS OF THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WORLD. ABILITY TO MAKE SUCH ON-SITE INSPECTIONS WOULD CLOSE A LARGE GAP IN CURRENT KNOWLEDGE OF EARTHQUAKE EFFECTS ACCORDING TO SOME DELEGATES WHO HAD PARTICIPATED IN SUCH STUDY EFFORTS ELSEWHERE. IN RETURN, THE US COULD AGREE TO ALLOW A SOVIET TEAM TO INSPECT THE CONSEQUENCES OF A POSSIBLE MAJOR EARTHQUAKE IN THE US.

5. THE DELEGATION SIGNED A PROTOCOL CONTAINING AN EXTENSIVE PROGRAM OF JOINT WORK IN THE PERIOD THROUGH 1980 WHICH MAY PROVE DIFFICULT TO IMPLEMENT IN PRACTICE, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF THE DIFFICULTY THIS WORKING GROUP HAS HAD IN GETTING STARTED. (THIS WAS THE FIRST VISIT OF A US DELEGATION IN THE 10.04 WORKING GROUP SINCE THE HOUSING AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED IN 1974.) IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THE MOST BENEFICIAL FORM OF COOPERATION WOULD BE FOR A SMALL GROUP OF US SPECIALISTS TO SPEND SEVERAL MONTHS WORKING AT A SOVIET TEST FACILITY, ESPECIALLY THE ONE THE DELEGATION VISITED IN TBILISI. THE PROPOSAL FOR AN AGREEMENT TO ALLOW THE VISIT OF A POST EARTHQUAKE STUDY TEAM WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO ARRANGE IN VIEW OF THE SOVIET RELUCTANCE TO ADMIT THE EXISTENCE OF NATURAL DISASTERS, LET ALONE ALLOW FOREIGNERS TO OBSERVE THEIR CONSEQUENCES.

NEVERTHELESS, THE EXCHANGE WOULD APPEAR TO OFFER SUBSTANTIAL POTENTIAL BENEFIT. HOWEVER, THIS INITIATIVE WOULD NEED TO BE PURSUED CAREFULLY AND PERSISTENTLY THROUGH THE WORKING GROUP CHANNEL AND AT THE FORTHCOMING HOUSING AGREEMENT JCM IF IT IS TO HAVE ANY CHANCE OF SOVIET ACCEPTANCE. TOON

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